The Argotect's Guide to Runecraft

D&D 5E HOMEBREW

Sixty-two magical runes to customize your gear with.

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Runecraft

Runecraft gives adventurers the ability to customize their gear with endless combinations of magical runes suited to their needs and wants. While runecrafting techniques are easy to comprehend and very rewarding, they are highly demanding and time-consuming; one minor mistake can render an entire project useless.

The following rules give an in-depth look at 62 unique and powerful runes, as well as the different techniques for creating and maintaining them.

Runes & Runestones

Runes are small, intricately carved symbols infused with magical powers, while runestone is a small stone containing a rune's power until re-etched onto an item. Both can be found throughout the world, sold in shops, hidden away in tombs and dungeons, or etched onto long-forgotten adventuring gear, waiting to be used or extracted for new creations. Runes have the following traits:

Tier. A rune's tier determines its effectiveness. Runes begin at tier 1 when created and most can be enhanced to a maximum of tier 3. Enhancing a rune to higher tiers increases or modifies the effects of its trait.

Compatibility. A trait's compatibility dictates the specific kind of item a rune can be etched onto. A rune can't be etched onto originally magical items or incompatible items.

Trait. A trait is the unique magical effect of a rune. Traits can only be accessed once an item has been etched with a rune and is being worn or held. A creature can't benefit from wearing multiple items etched with matching runes.

Rune Types

Runes are separated into two categories: essential runes and aspect runes.

Essential Rune. An essential rune enhance the effectiveness of an item by improving its potency, defenses, or key mechanics. Items can have only one essential rune at a time.

Aspect Rune. An aspect rune grant items additional magical powers or special effects. Items can have up to three aspect runes etched on it simultaneously.

Runecraft Techniques

There are three techniques in Runecraft: etching, enhancing, and extracting. Each one requires hours of work, lots of gold, and challenging skill checks. The payoff is being the owner of unique and powerful magical items.

The process of creating and maintaining runes requires proficiency with and access to a specific set of artisan's tools based on an item's primary material. The Material & Proficiencies table on the right shows the tools required when working with a specific material.

The Technique tables show the amount of time and cost in gold, as well as the DCs for each technique's artisan's tool check. The DM may adjust these values as if they wish.

Material & Tool Proficiencies

Item Material	Tool Proficiency
Cloth	Weaver's Tools
Leather, Hide	Leatherworker's Tools
Metal	Smith's Tools or Tinker's Tools
Stone	Mason's Tools
Wood, Bone	Woodcarver's Tools

Technique Time & Cost

Technique	Time	Cost
Etching	2 hours per Tier	600 gp per Tier
Enhancing	4 hours per Tier	1,200 gp per Tier
Extracting	2 hours per Tier	300 gp per Tier

Technique DCs

Technique	Tier 1 Rune	Tier 2 Rune	Tier 3 Rune
Etching	15	20	25
Enhancing	20	25	—
Extracting	10	15	20

Sigils (Optional Rule)

For an even more detailed experience, consider requiring your players to possess knowledge of the individual designs for each rune called sigils. Each rune has a unique sigil that must be known and understood before it can be etched onto an item or enhanced. Higher-tiered runes require more advanced sigil designs, representing a more complex magical effect.

Sigils can take any form you or your players wish and could be discovered in ancient ruins, uncovered through intense research, or taught and sold by expert runecrafters.

Etching

Etching a rune imparts its traits onto an item. This causes the item to become magical and requires attunement. Originally magical items can't be etched with a rune.

Only one rune can be etched onto an item at a time. Items can have up to three runes simultaneously, but no more than one essential rune. An item can have up to three aspect runes with the same trait only if multiple options are presented in the rune's description and different options are chosen. For instance, a longsword may have two *culling* runes only if different creature types were chosen for each rune.

To begin etching, you must have an item without an essential rune or an item with less than three aspect runes. You must also possess a rune compatible with the item.

See the Techniques tables on page 1 for the requirements to successfully etch a rune onto an item. On a failed check, the gold is lost and the rune is destroyed.

Naming Your Items

Deciding how to name or reference a rune-etched item is largely up to its creator, but consider listing any essential rune first, followed by any aspect runes. You could also play around with prefixes and suffixes, or make up a unique name for it. Including each individual rune's tier in the name is up to you, but it's good to keep track of it somehow.

For example, Vaeloria has been hard at work etching two runes, the *inspiring* essential rune and the *glamorous* aspect rune, onto her breastplate. After successfully etching the runes, she refers to it as her *inspiring* breastplate *of glamour*.

Enhancing

Enhancing a rune to a higher tier increases or modifies the effects of its trait. Not all runes can be enhanced.

Runes must be extracted onto a runestone before being enhanced. Only one rune can be enhanced at a time. A tier 1 rune must be enhanced to tier 2 before it can be enhanced to tier 3.

To begin enhancing you must have a tier 1 or tier 2 rune.

See the Technique tables on page 1 for the requirements to successfully enhance a rune to a higher tier. On a failed check, the gold is lost and the rune is destroyed.

Extracting

Extracting a rune removes it from an item and places it onto a runestone, retaining its current tier. If all runes are extracted from an item it becomes non-magical if it was originally, and removes attunement.

Only one rune can be extracted at a time. Any chosen option in the rune's effects is removed when extracted, allowing a new option to be chosen later when re-etched onto an item.

To begin extracting you must have an item with at least one rune etched on it and a small stone.

See the Technique tables on page 1 for the requirements to successfully extract a rune from an item. On a failed check, the gold is lost and the rune is destroyed.

List of Runes

There are 62 runes, each with unique effects and specific compatibility requirements. A rune's trait can only be accessed while being worn or held. They are provided in alphabetical order by essential runes then aspect runes.

Essential Runes

Attentive

Rings, Spellcasting Foci

Once per long rest you can gain advantage on concentration checks for 1 minute.

At higher tiers. The duration increases to 10 minutes at tier 2, and 1 hour at tier 3.

Avoidant

Armor, Shields

Once per short rest when you are targeted by an attack you can see, you can use a reaction to immediately give the attacker disadvantage.

At higher tiers. You can use this rune twice per short rest at tier 2, and three times per short rest at tier 3.

Inspiring

All Items

Once per long rest as a reaction, you can speak a command word and grant all allies within a 10-foot radius of an item etched with this rune advantage on their next d20 roll.

At higher tiers. The radius increases by 10 feet for each tier above 1.

Lethal

Weapons

A weapon etched with this rune scores a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.

At higher tiers. A critical hit is scored on a roll of 18-20 at tier 2. A critical hit is scored on a roll of 17-20 at tier 3.

Masterwork

Weapons

Weapons etched with this rune gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls.

At higher tiers. The bonus to attack and damage rolls increases by 1 for each tier above 1.

Potent

Armor, Rings

When this rune is etched onto an item, choose one of the following abilities: Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma. The ability score of your chosen ability increases by 2.

At higher tiers. The ability score bonus increases by 1 for each tier above 1.

Preserving

Armor, Rings

Once per long rest while dying ,you can gain advantage on a single death save.

At higher tiers. You can use this rune twice per long rest at tier 2, and three times per long rest at tier 3.

Protective
Armor, Shields, Rings

You gain a +1 bonus to your Armor Class.

At higher tiers. The Armor Class bonus increases by 1 for each tier above 1.

Quickened
Weapons

Once per long rest after successfully hitting a creature with an attack using a weapon etched with this rune, you can use a bonus action to immediately make another attack with the same weapon. This attack is made with your proficiency bonus and can't benefit from any additional spells, runes, or effects.

At higher tiers. You can use this rune twice per long rest at tier 2, and three times per long rest at tier 3.

Refocusing
Rings, Spellcasting Foci

Once per long rest as an action, you can hold aloft an item etched with this rune and restore one expended spell slot. The spell slot must be of a spell level you have access to and can have a combined level that is equal to or less than this rune's tier multiplied by 2.

At higher tiers. You can use this rune twice per long rest at tier 2, and three times per long rest at tier 3.

Reinforced
Armor, Shields

When this rune is etched onto an item, choose one of the following damage types: bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing. When you take damage of the chosen type, you can use a reaction to reduce the damage by 1d10.

At higher tiers. The amount of damage that can be reduced increases by 1d10 for each tier above 1.

Resilient
Armor, Shields

When this rune is etched onto an item, choose one of the following damage types: acid, cold, fire, force, lightning, necrotic, or radiant. When you take damage of the chosen type, you can use a reaction to reduce the damage by 1d10.

At higher tiers. The amount of damage that can be reduced increases by 1d10 for each tier above 1.

Resolute
Armor, Rings, Spellcasting Foci

When this rune is etched onto an item, choose one of the following abilities: Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma. You gain proficiency in saving throws of the chosen ability.

At higher tiers. The bonus to saving throws increases by 1 for each tier above 1.

Restful
Light Armor, Rings

You can benefit from a long rest after only 6 hours of uninterrupted rest.

At higher tiers. The amount of sleep required is reduced by 1 hour for each tier above 1.

Soothing
Rings, Shields

Once per long rest as a bonus action you can regain 2d6 hit points. If the amount regained exceeds your maximum amount of hit points, any extra amount becomes temporary hit points.

At higher tiers. The amount of hit points restored increases by 2d6 for each tier above 1.

Subjugating
Rings, Spellcasting Foci

You gain a +1 bonus to your spell save DC .

At higher tiers. Your spell save DC increases by 1 for each tier above 1.

Swift
Armor

Your speed increases by 5 feet. Additionally, once per short rest you can dash, disengage, or dodge as a bonus action.

At higher tiers. Your speed increases by 5 feet for each tier above 1.

Vicious
Weapons

A weapon etched with this rune gains one additional damage dice. For instance, a maul would deal 3d6 damage instead of 2d6 damage.

Aspect Runes

All-Seeing
Rings, Spellcasting Foci

Once per long rest as an action you can speak a command word and gain 60 feet of truesight for 1 minute.

Truesight allows you to see in normal and magical darkness, see invisible creatures and objects, automatically detect visual illusions and succeed on saving throws against them, and perceive the original form of a shapechanger or a creature that is transformed by magic. Furthermore, you can see into the Ethereal Plane.

At higher tiers. The duration increases to 10 minutes at tier 2, and 1 hour at tier 3.

Animating
Shields, Spellcasting Foci, Weapons

Once per long rest as an action, you can drop an item etched with this rune and speak a command word, causing it to become animated as per the *animate objects* spell.

Aquatic
Armor, Rings

You have a swim speed equal to your normal speed and can breathe underwater for 10 minutes.

At higher tiers. The underwater breathing duration increases to 1 hour at tier 2, and 4 hours at tier 3.

Aromatic
All Items

An item etched with this rune emits a scent of your choice.

Athletic
Armor, Rings

You gain a +1 bonus to Strength (Athletics) checks when attempting to grapple a creature or perform athletic feats such as jumping, climbing, and swimming.

At higher tiers. The Strength (Athletics) bonus increases by 1 for each tier above 1.

Burning
Weapons

A weapon etched with this rune deals an extra 1d6 fire damage. Additionally, once per turn after you successfully hit a creature with an attack, you can force them to attempt a DC 12 Constitution saving throw.

On a failure they take 1d6 fire damage at the beginning of each of their turns for 1 minute, or until they or another creature uses an action to douse the flames. On a success or once the flames are doused, they are immune to the effects of this rune for 24 hours.

At higher tiers. The Constitution saving throw DC increases by 2 for each tier above 1.

Catlike
Light and Medium Armor

Any falling damage you take is halved and you always land on your feet.

Comfortable
Medium and Heavy Armor

You can sleep in armor etched with this rune without gaining any penalties.

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Corrosive
Weapons

A weapon etched with this rune deals an extra 1d6 acid damage. Additionally, once per turn after you successfully hit a creature with an attack, you can force them to attempt a DC 12 Constitution saving throw.

On a failure the creature's Armor Class is reduced by 1d4 for 1 minute. On a success they are immune to the effects of this rune for 24 hours.

At higher tiers. The Constitution saving throw DC increases by 2 for each tier above 1.

Culling
Weapons

When this rune is etched onto an item, choose one of the following creature types: beast, construct, dragon, elemental, fey, giant, humanoid, monstrosity, ooze, or plant. A weapon etched with this rune deals 1d6 extra damage to the chosen creature type.

At higher tiers. The amount of extra damage increases by 1d6 for each tier above 1.

Decaying
Weapons

A weapon etched with this rune deals an extra 1d6 necrotic damage. Additionally, once per turn after you successfully hit a creature with an attack, you can force them to attempt a DC 12 Constitution saving throw.

On a failure they have disadvantage on their first attack roll, saving throw, or ability check until the end of their next turn. On a success they are immune to the effects of this rune for 24 hours.

At higher tiers. The Constitution saving throw DC increases by 2 for each tier above 1.

Discerning
Rings, Shields, Spellcasting Foci, Weapons

When a creature tells a lie within 1 foot of an item etched with this rune, it hums softly and glows with dim red light.

Disguising
Rings

Once per short rest, you can alter your voice or facial features for 1 minute.

At higher tiers. The duration is increased to 30 minutes at tier 2, and 1 hour at tier 3.

Distant
Weapons with the Range or Thrown weapon property.

A ranged or thrown weapon etched with this rune has its normal and maximum range extended by 20 feet.

At higher tiers. Both ranges are extended an additional 20 feet for each tier above 1.

Dreadful
Weapons

Once per turn after you successfully hit a creature with an attack, you can force them to attempt a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw.

On a failure the creature gains the frightened condition for 1 minute. At the beginning of each of its turns it can

repeat the saving throw to remove the condition. On a success they are immune to the effects of this rune for 24 hours.

At higher tiers. The Constitution saving throw DC increases by 2 for each tier above 1.

Elemental

Weapons

When this rune is etched onto a weapon, choose one of the following damage types: acid, cold, fire, force, or lightning. When you deal damage to a creature or object with a weapon etched with this rune, you can change the weapon's original damage type into the chosen type.

Enlarging

Weapons

Once per long rest, you can use a bonus action to speak a command word and cause a weapon etched with this rune to double in size for 1 minute. The weapon gains the heavy and two-handed weapon properties if it didn't have them already, and deals an additional 1d4 damage. As a free action you can speak a command word to cause the weapon to regain its original size.

At higher tiers. The additional damage increases by 1d4 for each tier above 1.

Freezing

Weapons

A weapon etched with this rune deals an extra 1d6 cold damage. Once per turn after you successfully hit a creature with an attack, you can force them to attempt a DC 12 Constitution saving throw.

On a failure the creature's speed is halved for 1 minute. At the beginning of each of its turns it can repeat the saving throw. On a success they are immune to the effects of this rune for 24 hours.

At higher tiers. The Constitution saving throw DC increases by 2 for each tier above 1.

Glamorous

All Items

Once per short rest as an action, you can speak a command word to create an illusion of your choice that conceals an item etched with this rune for 1 hour. The illusion must be of a similar size and shape as the original item.

A creature interacting with the illusion must succeed a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check to see through the illusion. The illusion is dispelled if the item is hit with an attack or is used to attack a creature or object.

At higher tiers. The Intelligence (Investigation) check DC increases by 2 for each tier above 1.

Glorious

Weapons

A weapon etched with this rune deals an extra 1d6 radiant damage. Once per turn as a bonus action, you can speak a command word to call forth a blinding flash of white light from the weapon. Creatures of your choice in a 10-foot radius must attempt a DC 12 Constitution saving throw.

On a failure a creature gains the blinded condition for 1 minute. At the beginning of each of its turns it can repeat the saving throw to remove the condition. On a success they are immune to the effects of this rune for 24 hours.

At higher tiers. The Constitution saving throw DC increases by 2 for each tier above 1.

Hovering

Light and Medium Armor

Once per long rest, you can use a bonus action to speak a command word and ascend 3 feet into the air. You remain hovering there until the beginning of your next turn and can move as normal. Ending your turn over lower elevation causes you to descend to it at a slow pace.

At higher tiers. You can use this rune twice per long rest at tier 2, and three times per long rest at tier 3.

Mighty

Armor

You gain advantage on Strength checks when attempting to push, pull, lift, or throw. Additionally your carrying capacity weight increases by 100 pounds.

At higher tiers. The carrying capacity weight increases by an additional 100 pounds for each tier above 1.

Mobile

Armor

When this rune is etched onto a set of armor, choose one of the following types of movement: jumping, climbing, or swimming. You gain 20 feet of movement in the chosen type. This movement is only applied when using the chosen type, and is not combined with any additional movement speeds you may have.

At higher tiers. The chosen type of movement increases by 10 feet for each tier above 1.

Neutralizing

Armor, Rings, Spellcasting Foci

Once per long rest as an action you can speak a command word and remove the poisoned condition from yourself or a creature you can touch.

Alternatively, you can cause yourself or another creature you can touch to become immune to the poisoned condition for 1 hour, or remove a disease.

At higher tiers. You can use this rune twice per long rest at tier 2, and three times per long rest at tier 3.

Nimble

Light and Medium Armor, Rings

You gain a +1 bonus to Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks when attempting to escape a grapple or when performing acrobatic feats such as tumbling, jumping, and balancing.

At higher tiers. The Dexterity (Acrobatics) bonus increases by 1 for each tier above 1.

Phasing

Armor, Rings, Spellcasting Foci

Once per short rest as a bonus action you can speak a command word and instantly teleport to an unoccupied space up to 30 feet away.

At higher tiers. The teleportation distance increases by 30 feet for each tier above 1.

Reaping

Weapons

Once per long rest, when you successfully hit a creature with an attack using a weapon etched with this rune, you can deal an extra 1d12 necrotic damage. You may then use a reaction to regain an amount of hit points equal to the extra necrotic damage dealt. If the attack kills the creature, you gain 2d10 temporary hit points.

At higher tiers. You can use this rune twice per long rest at tier 2, and three times per long rest at tier 3.

Reassuring

Armor, Rings, Spellcasting Foci

Once per long rest as an action you can remove one of the following conditions affecting you or a creature you can touch: blinded, deafened, frightened, or exhausted.

At higher tiers. You can use this rune twice per long rest at tier 2, and three times per long rest at tier 3.

Returning

Shields, Spellcasting Foci, Weapons

As a reaction you can speak a command word, and an item etched with this rune immediately returns to you after being thrown or left unattended. The item can return from up to 100 feet away. It blinks out of existence and appears in an open hand or at your feet .

At higher tiers. The distance the weapon can return increases by 100 feet for each tier above 1.

Rebuking

Armor, Shields

Once per short rest when you are hit by a melee attack you can see, you can use a reaction to push the attacking creature 10 feet directly away from you.

At higher tiers. The distance you can push the creature increases by 10 feet for each tier above 1.

Shadow-Touched

Light and Medium Armor

You gain a +1 bonus to Dexterity (Stealth) checks when attempting to hide or sneak in areas of darkness.

At higher tiers. The Dexterity (Stealth) bonus increases by 1 for each tier above 1.

Shedding

Armor

Armor etched with this rune can be donned and doffed as an action.

Sheltering

Armor, Rings

You gain a +1 bonus on saving throws when attempting to withstand environmental effects such as extreme heat or freezing temperatures.

At higher tiers. The bonus to saving throws increases by 1 for each tier above 1.

Shifting

Weapons

When this rune is etched onto a weapon, choose another weapon in your possession you have proficiency with. As a free action you can speak a command word and cause the weapon to shift between forms.

At higher tiers. The weapon is able to shift into one additional chosen weapon for each tier above 1.

Shining

All Items

As a free action, you can speak a command word to call forth any color of light from an item etched with this rune. The item sheds bright light in a 20-foot radius and dim light for an additional 20 feet. As a free action you can speak a command word to dispel the light.

At higher tiers. The radius of bright light and dim light increases by 20 feet for each tier above 1.

Shocking

Weapons

A weapon etched with this rune deals an extra 1d6 lightning damage. Additionally, once per long rest after you successfully hit a creature with an attack, you can force them to attempt a DC 12 Constitution saving throw.

On a failure the creature gains the stunned condition until the end of their next turn. On a success they are immune to the effects of this rune for 24 hours.

At higher tiers. The Constitution saving throw DC increases by 2 for each tier above 1.

Shrinking

Armor, Shields, Spellcasting Foci, Weapons

Once per long rest, you can use a free action to speak a command word and cause an item etched with this rune to shrink in size for 1 minute. The item becomes half its size, and weapons deal 1d4 less damage (this can't reduce the damage below 1). This trait can't be activated while wearing armor etched with this rune. As a free action, you can speak a command word and cause it to regain its original size.

At higher tiers. The duration is increased to 10 minutes at tier 2, and 1 hour at tier 3.

Singing

All Items

Once per short rest as a free action, you can cause an item etched with this rune to emit a song of your choice that can be heard up to 30 feet away.

At higher tiers. One additional song can be sung and the distance it can be heard increases by 30 feet for each tier above 1.

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Smiting
Weapons

When this rune is etched onto an item, choose one of the following creature types: aberration, celestial, fiend, or undead. A weapon etched with this rune deals 1d6 extra damage to the chosen creature type.

At higher tiers. The amount of extra damage increases by 1d6 for each tier above 1.

Spell-Keeping
All Items

When this rune is etched onto an item, choose one spell of a spell level you currently have access to that is equal to or less than this rune's tier multiplied by 2. That spell is kept within the item. A spell held in this way can be cast once per long rest. Choose Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma for your spellcasting ability for this spell when this rune is etched onto an item.

Sustaining
Rings

You don't need to eat or drink for one week. After a week has passed you must spend 4 hours consuming at least 10 pounds of food and liquids. Afterwards, you don't need to eat or drink again for one week.

Vigilant
All Items

When this rune is etched onto an item, choose one of the following creature types: aberration, beast, celestial, construct, dragon, elemental, fey, fiend, giant, humanoid, monstrosity, ooze, plant, or undead.

When a creature is within 30 feet of an item etched with this rune, it hums softly and glows with dim blue light.

At higher tiers. The detection distance increases by 30 feet for each tier above 1.

Warding
Shields

Once per long rest as a bonus action you can speak a command word and let go of a shield etched with this rune. When you do it revolves around you until the end of your next turn, or until you use a free action to speak another command word to dispel this effect.

While the shield revolves around you, attacks against you have disadvantage and you gain advantage on Dexterity saving throws. At the end of the duration the shield drops to the ground at your feet.

At higher tiers. You can use this rune twice per long rest at tier 2, and three times per long rest at tier 3.

Winged
Armor

Once per long rest as a bonus action, you can speak a command word and cause a set of armor etched with this rune to sprout wings, granting a creature who wears it a flying speed equal to their walking speed for 1 minute. At the end of the duration the wings disappear and the wearer of the armor falls to the ground.

At higher tiers. The duration increases to 10 minutes at tier 2, and 1 hour at tier 3.

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